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The health of a nation depends on many factors. Preventive medical care or even a lower infant mortality rate does not necessarily mean the betterment of general health. Malnutrition or an insufficient diet may offset whatever has been accomplished by vaccinations and inoculations. Since little information is revealed in Communist publications on the diet and nutrition of the Chinese people, it is essential to point out that while reports on health and sanitation improvements in the different regions need not necessarily be discounted, other factors must be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the general health of the Chinese people. (For a discussion of famines and man-made shortage of food, see chapters on Agriculture and Public Welfare.)

One difficult problem which the Bureau of Public Health of the Canton Municipal government had to meet in early 1950 concerned the disposal of human ordure. It was the custom in Canton, as in many other places in China, to transport feces to the rural areas to be used as fertilizer. A proposal to construct an organic fertilizer plant in the suburbs of Canton was adopted to meet this problem. The proposal explained that such a plant would utilize human ordure and garbage from the city for the manufacture of organic fertilizer and would also bring in profits to assist municipal expenditure and to help promote public health. A petition was sent to the regional authorities in Wuhan, and the Canton Municipal government thereupon received an appropriation of JMP$17,000,000,000 (nearly US$800,000) from the Central-South Committee of Financial and Economic Affairs. Construction was begun in August 1950.

After this sum had been spent, Deputy Mayor Chu Kuang added a floating capital of JMP$5,000,000,000. By April 1951, all the money was gone and the scheme had to be given up, but it was not until March 1953 that the case was brought to a conclusion and Chu Kuang removed from office. In the report on the case of the organic fertilizer plant in Canton, made by the Canton Municipal Government in March 1953, it was said: "During the process of the erection of the organic fertilizer plant, the leadership abandoned its duties of supervision and inspection and placed blind confidence...in the technicians whose bourgeois viewpoints had not been properly reformed, and who proceeded with the task on the basis of their own bourgeois viewpoints and thoughts. For example, before the factory for disposal of ordure had been erected, palatial residences and western type hostels had been built, with American-type modern conveniences, for the enjoyment of a few [officials], while little attention was paid to the lodgings and amenities of the majority of the workers. The construction schedule was not adhered to, and a number of tasks were commenced simultaneously. As a result, when the buildings were completed the machinery equipment could not be installed. And when the machinery equipment was finally installed, it could not be operated. In the civil construction tasks alone, many jobs had to be done over again.... There was great confusion in personnel and financial management. The employees of the plant, with the exception of a few appointed through the Party organization, had all been brought in because they enjoyed one of the five-fellowship relationships and

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